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SAN DIEGO DRUG COURT CELEBRATES TWO YEARS OF SUCCESS

26 Former Drug Offenders Recognized in Drug Court Graduation Ceremony

WHEN: Tuesday, March 23, 1999, at 6 p.m.

WHERE: San Diego County Hall of Justice, Jury Lounge, 330 West Broadway, San Diego

WHO: San Diego Drug Court Program -- a partnership between the San Diego Superior Court, San Diego Police Department, San Diego City Attorney's Office, San Diego District Attorney's Office, San Diego Public Defender's Office, San Diego Sheriff's Department, and local public and private drug treatment providers.

WHAT: Graduation of twenty-six former drug offenders, who are successfully completing a rigorous, year-long, court-monitored program to end their substance abuse and create more productive lives.

WHY: The Drug Court Program is celebrating two years of saving the lives of San Diegans. Drug Court recognizes that incarceration of drug offenders alone will not solve the drug problem. An aggressive program that holds offenders accountable, while also providing them with substance abuse treatment, is less expensive and more effective. Since March 1997, the San Diego Drug Court Program has graduated more than 70 participants, who have received substance abuse rehabilitation as well as educational and vocational training and job placements, and, in many cases, have been reunited with family members. San Diego Drug Court participants have also given birth to three drug-free babies. More than 80 percent of San Diego Drug Court graduates have remained drug-free, sober, and law abiding following graduation, while less than 55 percent of drug offenders who are processed through the traditional criminal justice system do not reoffend (based on 1995 U.S. Dept. of Justice statistics). It costs about \$3,000 to put a participant through the Drug Court Program for a year, while it costs about \$30,000 to incarcerate a drug offender for a year. The members of the Drug Court team, including the judge and the legal, law enforcement, and treatments professionals, and the graduates' families will attend Tuesday's graduation.

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